

QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE PLAN
National Review of Reading Programs
The Partnership for Reading/National Institute for Literacy

Introduction

This performance-based Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan (QASP) sets forth the procedures and guidance that the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL) will use in evaluating the technical performance of the Contractor. A copy of this plan will be furnished to the Contractor so that the Contractor will be aware of the methods that the Government will use in evaluating performance on this contract so that the Government may address any concerns that the Contractor prior to evaluation of the Contractor's performance.

Purpose of the QASP

The QASP is intended to accomplish the following:

1. Define the roles and responsibilities of participating Government officials and outside experts;
2. Define the key deliverables that will be assessed;
3. Describe the rating elements and standards of performance against which the Contractor's performance will be assessed for each key deliverable;
4. Describe the process of quality assurance assessment; and
5. Provide copies of the quality assurance monitoring forms that will be used by the Government in documenting and evaluating the Contractor's performance.

Each of these purposes is discussed below.

Roles and Responsibilities of Participating Government Officials and Experts

The **Contracting Officer's Representative (COR)** will be responsible for monitoring, assessing, recording, and reporting on the technical performance of the Contractor on a day-to-day basis. The COR/CO may choose to assemble a Quality Assurance Review Panel (QARP) to complete the Key Deliverable Evaluation Form (described below) that will be used to document the inspection and evaluation of the Contractor's work performance on the key deliverables.

Federal government employees (no fewer than two) serving as expert reviewers may be identified in conjunction with the COR/CO to serve as QARP members. These individuals may serve with the COR/CO in assessing key deliverables. The QARP may include members from the agencies that compose The Partnership for Reading — the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the Department of Health and Human Services.

The **Contracting Officer (CO), or his representative**, will have overall responsibility for overseeing the Contractor's performance. The CO will also be responsible for the day-to-day

monitoring of the Contractor's performance in the areas of contract compliance, contract administration, cost control and property control; reviewing the COR/CO's assessment of the Contractor's performance; and resolving all differences between the COR/CO's version and the Contractor's version. The CO may call upon the expertise of other Government officials as required.

The **Contracting Officer's** (CO) procurement authorities include the following:

SOLE authority for any decisions that produce an increase or decrease in the scope of the contract,
SOLE authority for any actions subject to the "Changes" clause;
SOLE authority for any decision rendered under the "Disputes" clause;
SOLE authority for negotiation and determination of indirect rates applied to the contract,
SOLE authority to approve the substitution or replacement of the Project Director and other key personnel;
SOLE authority to approve the Contractor's invoices for payment, subject to the Limitation of Costs clause and the Limitation of Funds clause;
SOLE authority to monitor and enforce Department of Labor promulgated labor requirements,
SOLE authority to arrange and supervise quality assurance activities under this contract,
SOLE authority to approve the Contractor's Quality Control program; and Signatory authority for the issuance of all modifications to the contract.

Key Deliverables to be Assessed

Though the Government, through its COR/CO, will monitor the Contractor's performance on a continuing basis, the volume of tasks performed by the Contractor makes technical inspections of every task and step impractical. Accordingly, the National Institute for Literacy will use a quality assurance review process to monitor the Contractor's performance under this contract. Specifically, the QARP will assess the contractor's performance across a set of uniform rating elements for each of the following key deliverables.

- Draft plan for conducting review
- Revised plan
- Preliminary list of panelists
- Proposed evaluation criteria (*if new criteria are developed*)
- Preliminary report
- Final report

Rating Elements and Standards of Performance for Key Deliverables

The Contractor's performance shall be evaluated by assessing the key deliverables described above. The rating elements and acceptable standards of performance for the key deliverables are described below:

(1) Quality of Performance

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- a. Completeness: Contractor addressed all of the requirements relating to the deliverable under review.
 - b. Content of deliverable meets criteria established for scientifically-based reading research as defined in the Reading Excellence Act.
 - c. Professionalism: professional look, including consistent look and feel among Partnership for Reading products.
- (2) Timeliness
- a. Delivered/revised according to schedule established in the contract, or as modified by the CO.
- (3) Effectiveness
- a. Extent to which the deliverable meets the needs of the target audience as identified by the Partnership for Reading.
- (4) Cost
- a. Cost is within budget or at a cost savings to the Government.
- (5) Internal Quality Control
- a. Extent to which Contractor identifies problems and/or deficiencies and self-corrects them.

Process of Quality Assurance Assessment

A determination of the contractor's overall performance will be made at project end. The COR/CO and the QARP will use the Key Deliverable Evaluation Form to document and evaluate the Contractor's performance on each of the key deliverables under this contract. The form will be completed independently for each deliverable assessment by each of the QARP members and by the COR/CO. The rating element scores will be averaged for each rater and rounded to the nearest tenth to arrive at an individual "overall" score. The raters' overall evaluation scores will then be averaged and rounded to the nearest integer to generate the final evaluation scores for that key deliverable. This final evaluation score will document the overall evaluation of Contractor performance for that key deliverable.

At a minimum, the following deliverables will be evaluated by the QARP:

- Draft plan for conducting review
- Final plan
- Preliminary list of panelists
- Proposed evaluation criteria (*if new criteria are developed*)
- Preliminary report
- Final report

Each key deliverable will be evaluated in accordance with the following definitions of contractor performance:

- Excellent—Level of performance, which exceeds the minimum standards of performance for the deliverable.

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- Satisfactory –Level of performance, which meets the minimum standards of performance for the deliverable.
- Unacceptable—Level of performance which is not acceptable and which fails to meet the minimum standards of performance for the deliverable.

Each QARP member and the COR/CO must substantiate, in narrative form, all individual scores that they judge to be indicative of “excellent “ or “unacceptable” performance. Performance at the “acceptable” level is expected from the Contractor.

The COR/CO will forward copies of all completed evaluation forms, without the QARP members’ names, and a report of the average scores to the CO and Contractor by the close of 30 business days from the date each deliverable is received by the COR.

For the purpose of documentation, the Contractor may respond in writing to any “unacceptable” final average evaluation scores within 5 working days after receipt of the form(s); however, this does not mean that the COR/CO or QARP members will change their scores, nor does it mean that final average score will be changed.

The CO will review each key deliverable evaluation form prepared by the QARP and/or the COR. When appropriate, the CO may investigate the event further to determine if all the facts and circumstances surrounding the event were considered in the QARP opinions outlined on the forms. The CO will immediately discuss every deliverable receiving an “unacceptable” with the Contractor to assure that corrective action is promptly initiated. Discussion with the contractor of the unacceptable performance or deliverable does not negate the National Institute for Literacy’s right to terminate the contractor for default for poor performance per FAR 52.249-6, Termination (Cost Reimbursement).

Award Fee

The award fee shall be awarded for performance judged to be “excellent.” If the contractor’s performance is rated as “unacceptable”, the Government will not award the fee. In order to be considered “satisfactory”, the deliverables for the period under review must be delivered no later than the date specified in the Schedule of Deliverables. (See FAR 52.249-14, Excusable Delays and EDAR 3452.242-71, Notice to the Government of Delays)

In the event of an excusable delay (defined in FAR 52.249-14, Excusable Delays, and EDGAR 3452.242-71, Notice to the Government of Delays, and interpreted by the CO or his representative), the National Institute of Literacy and the contractor shall work together to modify the contract in regard to the due date of the deliverables. If such an event were to occur that would require a modification to the due dates of the deliverables, the contractor’s performance, where applicable in this QASP, shall be measured by the date agreed upon in the modification.

The Contractor’s technical performance will be evaluated by assessing the quality of deliverables in accordance with the QASP. Following the assessment of each evaluated deliverable, the Contractor will be notified of the result. Following the final contract assessment, the Contractor

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will be notified within 45 calendar days regarding the award fee. The Contractor will incorporate this amount into an invoice within 30 days of the Government's notification.